



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff   Scott Smith Chief Deputy

## LAW OF THE MONTH – OCTOBER, 2017

### SCHOOL BUS VIOLATION

By now we are all aware that school is back in session and with that, many of our commutes to or from work are affected by school busses collecting children and transporting them safely to their respective schools. Well at least that is what all of us hope for. Every fall we in law enforcement receive an increase in calls from citizens and school bus drivers regarding vehicles not obeying the school bus stop sign and lights.

This is obviously a very serious situation as most people would not intentionally violate a school bus stop sign. We realize the danger that would pose to the children who are often too young to understand the dynamics involved with a school bus stopping, especially on a county road or highway, to load and unload. That means that most people who commit this violation are simply not paying attention enough to perceive that there is a bus stopped with its lights on. That is a scary thought because if they are not attentive enough to see a large yellow bus with flashing red lights and a stop sign, how can they perceive more subtle signs of danger that often materialize out of thin air while driving, much less take evasive action.

Wisconsin State Statute 346.48(1) states "The operator of a vehicle which approaches from the front or rear any school bus which has stopped on a street or highway when the bus is equipped according to s. 347.25 (2) and when it is displaying flashing red warning lights, **shall stop the vehicle not less than 20 feet from the bus** and shall remain stopped until the bus resumes motion or the operator extinguishes the flashing red warning lights." The fine for this offense is \$326.50 and four points against your license. More important is the danger that it puts others in and the potential criminal and civil liability you could face if a tragedy happens while you are violating this law.

Captain Scott Mittelstadt asks that we all be patient and alert while driving, especially when school busses are present.